

Dear Reviewer

Enclosed for your review is the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) for the implementation of the Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Project. This application provides all pertinent information required for Federal, state, and local permits as related to the Clean Water Act, Clallam County Shoreline Master Program, Hydraulic Project Approval, Aquatic Resources Use Authorization, and other permits requiring submittal of a JARPA. Approval and permitting of this project will allow for the onset of construction of the water quality and flood protection features and eventually removal of the dams and restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem.

This application is divided into five sections, presenting detailed information on individual projects. Each section following the introductory information represents a major facet of the restoration project.

JARPA Form and Introductory Information – This section provides information that is common to all proposed actions including a purpose and need statement, ownership list, project list with quantities and affected area computations, OHWM surveys and Modeling, and MHHW determination.

Dam Removal and Sediment Erosion – Details of the dam removal process are addressed in this section as well as the subsequent erosion of the lakebed sediments stored behind each dam.

LEKT Projects – Mitigation projects to be constructed on the Lower Elwha Klallam Reservation to mitigate for higher groundwater levels and potential flooding during high flow events and provide for fisheries propagation are presented in this section.

Water Quality Mitigation Projects – This section addresses the various methods of providing the City of Port Angeles and other water users with an adequate and clean municipal and industrial water supply.

Flood Protection Projects – Information provided here presents actions that could be taken to provide property owners with flood protection consistent with their existing level of protection.

Every effort has been made to describe impacts to jurisdictional waters or shorelines that lie near to a project's construction footprint even if the impact may be avoided. This ensures that all possible impacts to these resources are fully accounted for.

Two reports that are critical to successful restoration, Draft Elwha River Restoration – Physical Processes Monitoring Plan and Final Draft Glines Canyon Dam – Lake Mills Reservoir Revegetation Plan, can be found at the end of the Dam Removal and Sediment Erosion Section. The NEPA documents are incorporated by reference. Other background reports and information on this project can be found on the project web page:

<http://www.nps.gov/olym/elwha/documents.htm> and are incorporated by reference.

The Elwha Dam and Glines Canyon Dam on the Elwha River have adversely affected the river ecosystem and the native anadromous fisheries since 1913. The lower of the two dams — the Elwha Dam — is only 4.9 miles from the mouth of the river. This dam has formed the Lake Aldwell reservoir. The second dam — the Glines Canyon Dam — is 8.5 miles farther upstream and was completed in 1927; it forms the Lake Mills reservoir. These dams are the primary cause of a precipitous decline in fish runs to fewer than 3,000 naturally spawning fish today. Those species that still migrate into the Elwha River to spawn are restricted to the lower 4.9 miles of river, and the problems associated with crowding into this space are exacerbated by the near-elimination of spawning gravel and higher-than-normal water temperatures caused by the dams and reservoirs. The loss of fish from 93% of the Elwha River has resulted in severe impacts to

the entire river ecosystem due to the loss of nutrients and carcasses and the subsequent effects on aquatic and terrestrial vegetation and wildlife.

Congress passed the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act on January 3, 1992 (Elwha Act; Public Law 102-495) to address issue. This act authorized the full restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem and native anadromous fisheries. The Elwha Act also requires that Elwha River municipal and industrial water users be protected from the possible adverse effects of dam removal.

Three environmental impact statements were completed to analyze alternatives to implement the act. The *Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration: Final Environmental Impact Statement* (June 1995) evaluated options for restoring the Elwha River ecosystem and native anadromous fisheries. The subsequent "Record of Decision" selected the removal of both dams as the only option that would meet the goal of the Elwha Act.

The *Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation: Final Environmental Impact Statement* (November 1996) examined two ways of removing the dams, as well as the sediment stored behind them. The "Record of Decision" selected "river erosion" as the preferred alternative for removing sediment.

The *Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation: Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (July 2005) analyzed various actions to: (1) protect municipal and industrial water users and two fish propagation facilities (hatcheries) during dam removal, (2) provide flood protection at current levels, (3) provide the ability to treat wastewater for those residents whose septic systems would be rendered ineffective, and (4) protect listed fish to the maximum extent possible during and following dam removal.

Clallam County is currently reviewing the above documentation for compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act and is expected to provide notice of adoption in the near future. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries have prepared Biological Opinions under the Endangered Species Act for this project.

Stormwater plans have not yet been prepared for most of the projects with the exception of the Elwha Water Treatment Plant, although the enclosed Flood Protection drawings call for the use of silt fencing and best management practices. The Port Angeles Water Treatment Plant will discharge stormwater runoff into the Port Angeles stormwater system. The Elwha Surface Water Intake will be fully contained in coffer dams as will the removal of Elwha Dam. None of the other projects are far enough along in the design process to have stormwater plans. All construction contracts for the restoration project will require the contractor to submit construction stormwater plans for approval prior to moving onsite.

If you require additional information for your review, please contact Dick Bauman, at the Elwha Restoration Project Office at (360) 565 1324 in Port Angeles.

Sincerely,

William G. Laitner
Superintendent